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## A LOST UTOPIA OF THE FIRST AMERICAN FRONTIER

Early in 1743 the English traders among the Creeks incited the Indians to capture "one Priber, a Foreigner," who had come into their towns from the mountain country of the Cherokee. For several years past the authorities in the frontier provinces of South Carolina and Georgia had sought to arrest this individual, who was regarded by them as a most dangerous foe of English interests among the southern Indians, an agent of the French, even, it was darkly hinted, a Jesuit.

But in truth Priber was no ordinary backwoods *intrigant*, nor yet a Father Rale of the southern frontier. Though his career in America makes part of the story of imperial rivalry for the heart of the continent, it belongs as well to the history of the development of social and political ideas in the eighteenth century. His life was not without stirring incident and physical adventure; but his most memorable adventures were spiritual, idealistic. This phase of the man his provincial captors only dimly understood. At his examination at Frederica in the march colony of Georgia, General Oglethorpe and his frontiersmen found him "a very extraordinary Kind of a Creature," speaking "almost all Languages fluently, particularly English, Dutch, French, Latin and Indian." Further, it appeared that he had been scheming to set up "a Town at the Foot of the Mountains among the Cherokees, which was to be a City of Refuge for all Criminals, Debtors, and Slaves, who would fly thither from Justice or their Masters." The Georgian who wrote this account of Priber's designs, in a letter published in the *South Carolina Gazette* of August 15, 1743, continued: "There was a Book found upon him of his own Writing ready for the Press, which he owns and glories in . . . ; it demonstrates the Manner in which the Fugitives are to be subsisted, and lays down the Rules of Government which the town is to be governed by; to which he gives the Title of Paradise; He enumerates many whimsical Privileges and natural Rights, as he calls them, which his Citizens are to be entitled to, particularly dissolving

Marriages and allowing Community of Women, and all kinds of Licentiousness; the Book is drawn up very methodically, and full of learned Quotations; it is extreamly wicked, yet has several Flights full of Invention; and it is a Pity so much Wit is applied to so bad Purposes."

Even from so unsympathetic a report it is possible to discover in Priber one of the most singular figures in the history of the first American frontier: a backwoods utopian who, in the fourth decade of the eighteenth century, imported into the American wilderness the most radical current European social and political philosophy. This "very odd kind of man" (so James Oglethorpe, soldier and philanthropist, described him), who lived for seven years among the Cherokee Indians on the headwaters of the Tennessee river, who "ate, drank, slept, danced, dressed and painted himself, with the Indians, so that it was not easy," by the testimony of a trader, "to distinguish him from the natives"; whose only associates, besides the Indians, were captive French *voyageurs* and the hardy Carolinians who sought a commerce in skins and furs with the Cherokee by the mountain trail from distant Charles Town—was in fact a spiritual descendant of Plato of the *Republic*, of Sir Thomas More, of Campanella, and a precursor of Rousseau.

His city was never built upon the site of ancient Cusawatee. His book was apparently never published. Yet from the near-sighted accounts of contemporaries it is possible to reconstruct in some fashion the body of his ideas, and to assign him a place in that stirring of the human spirit which was the eighteenth century.

Few thinkers have found stranger chroniclers of their lives and opinions. There was James Adair, for forty years a trader among the Cherokee and Chickasaw Indians, whose classic "History of the American Indians" (a curious medley of frontier history and pseudo-ethnology) was published in London in 1775. There was Ludovick Grant, also for many years an Indian trader from South Carolina: perhaps a truer type of the rude frontiersmen who formed the vanguard of English imperialism in America than the literary and antiquarian Adair. There was Antoine Bonnefoy, *engagé* to the *voyageur* Chauvin dit Joyeuse, whose

misfortune it was, in 1741, to be captured, with several companions, by the hostile Cherokee near the mouth of the Ohio, bound with a convoy from New Orleans to the Illinois country. There was also an anonymous Englishman, at one time a resident of Georgia, who had conversed with Priber at Frederica, and who contributed a description of the captive, under the pen-name of "Americus," to Dodsley's *Annual Register* of the year 1760.<sup>1</sup>

In these accounts, as in several references to the man in the gazettes and in the official records, much was left obscure: even the exact form of his name. To Bonnefoy he was known as Privé Albert, obviously a variant of Priber (Pryber), or Preber, of the English narratives. Once, in a statement of the public debt of South Carolina for 1738-1739, when the expense of a party sent up to the Cherokee to arrest him was recorded, his name was paraded in the scholarly dignity of Dr. Priber. There was common agreement, however, that he was a German, specifically a Saxon, and that he was "a man of politeness and gentility." From Priber himself Bonnefoy learned that he was "of good family" and that he had been instructed "in all that a man ought to know," a fact confirmed by Adair, who declared that "he was adorned with every qualification that constitutes the gentleman." "His politeness," testified "Americus," "which dress or imprisonment could not disguise, attracted the notice of every gentleman at Frederica, and gained him the favor of many visits and conversations."—A strange *salon* for a *philosophe*, that barracks-prison at the edge of the American wilderness!—To his audience it was plain that he had "read much, was conversant with most of the arts and sciences; but in all greatly wedded to system and hypothesis."

During two decades and more before his capture by the English Priber had been maturing his project for a communistic republic:

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<sup>1</sup>Grant's deposition was printed in the *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, X, 54-65. Bonnefoy's relation has recently appeared, in translation, in Mereness (ed.): *Travels in the American Colonies* (1916). For the background of Priber's ideas, the studies of André Lichtenberger and Gilbert Chinard in the exotic and utopian literature of his age may be consulted.

first in his native country; then, when he was constrained to save his life by exile, in England; and finally, in America. He was but one, and one of the most obscure, of many men of that century of enlightenment who, with him, claimed the title of friends "to the natural rights of mankind," enemies "to tyranny, usurpation and oppression." His special significance arose from these circumstances: first, that in him converged most of those influences which, appearing more or less sporadically in others, gave to eighteenth-century "socialism" its chief distinguishing qualities—namely, the cult of antiquity, with its idealization of the classic republics and their law-givers; love of humanity, in its characteristic form of sensibility; preoccupation with moral ideas and metaphysical abstractions, such as natural rights, often to the exclusion of concrete reality; and, not least, the doctrine—which was to receive its classic statement in the works of Rousseau—of the "noble savage." And in the second place, whereas his immediate precursors and his contemporaries were writers of poems and romances, merely, like Fénelon, Vairasse d'Alais, Gueudeville, Claude Gilbert; or purely speculative thinkers, like Montesquieu and d'Argenson, Priber, with the *curé* Meslier perhaps alone in his generation, was definitely revolutionary. Less violent in his attack on existing society than the unfortunate *champenois* priest, he was more resolute to apply the remedy—a complete communism, civil, political, economic. Amid the prevailing detachment or downright pessimism of the social theorists of that day, his was indeed, as the editor of the *Annual Register* observed, "an uncommon mixture of philosophy and enthusiasm." Unlike most utopians of the century which preceded the French Revolution, he took his utopia seriously, and sought to realize it. He derived from the great utopians; but he pointed forward to Babeuf and to the nineteenth century.

What motives led Priber to choose America, and the Cherokee country in particular, for his experiment in the regeneration of society: an experiment which he hoped to develop later on a larger scale in France? Those to whom he confided his project have thrown no clear light on this point. Adair, Grant, and the Georgians, to be sure, believed that he was primarily a French agent, sent among that powerful and strategically situated tribe

to alienate them from the English; but certainly Bonnefoy and his companions did not recognize him as such, though they perceived that his politics served very well the French interest, in that he encouraged the Indians to preserve their independence. Probably he was actuated rather by his doctrinaire idealism, and by certain circumstances which gave to that portion of the British empire in America a special prominence at the period of his residence in England.

For more than two centuries the New World had exercised a magical dominion over the minds of such dreamers as Priber; and had, moreover, profoundly influenced the trend of their ideas toward communistic utopianism. The Golden Age of pagan antiquity, the Terrestrial Paradise of the middle ages, had been sought with a new zest, by men of the sixteenth century, in America. Significantly enough, Sir Thomas More had made the discoverer of "Utopia" a companion of Amerigo Vespucci. Montaigne, too, not without a trace of his accustomed irony, had depicted the "Cannibals" as a race falsely assumed to be barbarians, who in reality preserved from a state of nature manners and institutions more perfect than Plato and the philosophers had been able to conceive. Among those who wrote at first hand of the folk that peopled the New World were many who encouraged this enthusiastic interpretation. Most influential in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the writings of the Jesuit missionaries. As priests, devoted to a life of poverty and cherishing the social precepts of primitive Christianity; as scholars, versed in the classic tradition of republican virtue; as moralists, not loath to rebuke the vices of contemporary European society, the Jesuits were predisposed to take an optimistic view of the Indians of America, in whom they discovered, despite their savagery, the incarnation of many of their own ideals. From the Jesuit relations emerged the concept of the "noble savage" (*bon sauvage*) which was popularized in France, in England, and elsewhere in Europe, by a whole school of poets, romancers, and dramatists. This exotic, utopian literature was made the vehicle, not merely for social satire which exposed the superficial follies of Europeans, by contrast with the simple, unaffected, *natural* conduct of the savages; but for more or less serious as-

saults upon the very bases of European society. Equalitarianism—which, pushed to its logical conclusion, involved communism—was the guise in which the eighteenth century envisaged the democratic state. The most perfect example of such a state was to be found in America, in Paraguay. There the Jesuits had established among the natives a communist regime which enjoyed a remarkable vogue in contemporary Europe. For a variety of reasons, then, a social theorist like Priber, who aimed to rebuild society upon the foundations of essential human goodness, of natural right, of equality, must have been powerfully drawn to America, where eighteenth-century radical philosophy had found abundant confirmation of its premises.

Moreover, shortly before Priber's flight from the continent, there had been displayed in England a striking pageant of the American wilderness, the report of which may well have directed the interest of the philosophical Saxon exile to the country of the Cherokee. In 1730, Sir Alexander Cuming returned from an unofficial mission to the South Carolina frontier, bringing with him seven Cherokee chiefs, with whom the government, through the Board of Trade, entered into a treaty of friendship and commerce. While in London the Indians were "entertained at all the Publick Diversions of the Town" (so ran the legend on a contemporary print), "and carried to all places of Note & Curiosity." They were even received by the King at Windsor, where, it was said, "the Pomp and Splendour of the Court, and the Grandeur, not only of the Ceremony as well of the Place . . . struck them with infinite Surprise and Wonder." On the other hand, the English seem to have been impressed with their strict "Probity and Morality," their "easy and courteous" behavior. The interest in the southern frontier and its natives which this visit aroused in England was kept alive by the proposal of a new march colony between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers, a project which led in 1733 to the establishment of the province of Georgia.

In that year or shortly after Priber emigrated to South Carolina. Of his brief career as a provincial almost nothing has been recorded. By a strange coincidence another sojourner in Charles Town during that time was a Swiss engineer, employed upon

the sea defences of the colonial capital: one Gabriel Bernard, who was named affectionately by his nephew Jean-Jacques in the most famous of all autobiographies. Although by Bonnefoy's account Priber was forced to leave Carolina for the same reason that he had been compelled to flee from his native country (i. e., the opposition of the authorities to his subversive programme), his departure was apparently not made in haste. In three separate issues of the weekly *South Carolina Gazette* in December, 1735, there were advertised "to be sold by Mr. Priber near Mr. Laurans the Sadler, ready made mens cloaths, wiggs, spaterdashes of fine holland, shoes, boots, guns, pistols, powder, a silver repeating watch, a sword with a silver gilt hilt, English seeds, beds, & a fine chest of drawers very reasonable for ready Money, he intending to stay but a few weeks in this Town." From his store of genteel possessions he retained only paper and ink and a trunk filled with books. Having divested himself thus of the trappings of civilization, armed only with the weapons of the philosopher, Priber set fort on his extraordinary mission to the Indians of the southern Appalachians.

On the mid-course of the Tellico river, where that stream, which takes its rise high up on the western slope of the Unaka mountains, suddenly debouches into Tellico Plains—fifteen miles from its confluence with the Little Tennessee, not quite thirty miles from the junction of the latter with the Tennessee river—there stood Great Tellico, chief of the towns of the Over-Hill Cherokee. Its importance was due to its location on one of the branches of the Tennessee river (the route of the Cherokee in their raids upon the French and their Indians on the Ohio and the Mississippi); to its exposed position, by reason of which it bore the brunt of enemy attacks; and to the fact that at the time the acknowledged leader among the head-men of the Cherokee, whom Sir Alexander Cuming had designated, grandiloquently, as "Emperour" of the nation, was Moytoy of Tellico. It was this village, distant from Charles Town more than five hundred miles by trading path, which Priber selected as the principal scene of his labors.

The immediate success of Priber in soliciting the confidence of the Indians won the admiration and the envy of the English



traders who observed him. "Being a great Scholar he soon made himself master of their Tongue, and by his insinuating manner Indeavoured to gain their hearts, he trimm'd his hair in the indian manner & painted as they did going generally almost naked except a shirt & a Flap." In the view of Ludovick Grant, a principal trader at Tellico, and of his associates in the trade, these tactics alone must have convicted Priber of being a French agent. Certainly they were far removed from the ordinary methods of the English traders, who were constantly accused, by the English themselves, of contempt for the Indians, of dishonesty in their dealings with them, often of gross brutality. (That the English were in general the successful rivals of the French was due, not to their diplomacy, which was distinctly inferior, but to the cheapness and sufficiency of their trade.) The considerable influence which Priber won by adapting himself to the habits of the Indians he used to protect them from exploitation by the traders, to promote their independence and their advancement in the knowledge of useful arts and in organization, to turn them from war to the pursuits of peace, and to spread his propaganda of a communistic state.

By these policies Priber came into collision with certain of the traders and eventually with the South Carolina government. When he taught the Indians the use of weights and measures, and constructed for them steelyards, he probably accomplished more to protect them from cheating traders and pack-horsemen than had been accomplished in thirty years by a succession of assiduous but over-burdened Indian agents. But he was not content simply to make them more acute in their dealings with the whites. He sought to establish their independence, and their equality with all their neighbors, of whatever race or nationality. Adair, who did not grasp the exact nature of Priber's design, although he realized something of its scope, wrote that he "inflated the artless savages, with a prodigious high opinion of their own importance in the American scale of power, on account of the situation of their country, their martial disposition, and the great number of their warriors, which would baffle all the efforts of the ambitious, and ill-designing British colonists." "Americus" was probably more accurate in ascribing to him

the aim of engaging the Indians "to throw off the yoke of their European allies, of all nations." Both the English and the French he taught them to regard "as interlopers, and the invaders of their own rights." "Believe me," he predicted after his capture, "before this century is past, the Europeans will have a very small footing on this continent." Nevertheless it was the English whose interests were immediately imperilled; and certain of Priber's acts gave color to the belief that he was in the French service. Despite occasional efforts of the French in Louisiana to open relations with the Cherokee, the English of Carolina had enjoyed a practical monopoly of their trade. Priber argued that an effective means "to preserve their liberties" would be "by opening a water communication between them and New Orleans." "For the future," he advised, they "should trade with both upon the same footing, which would be their greatest security for they would then be courted & caressed & receive presents from both." Again, he exerted himself to dissuade the Indians from warlike enterprises. The long-time enemies of the Over-Hill Cherokee were the French and their Indian allies of the Mississippi and Ohio valleys. When raids were incited by the English traders Priber worked, in concert with French prisoners like Bonnefoy, to frustrate them. To a remarkable degree the Indians appear to have entered into his "spirit of pacification." In all his counsel Priber professed to be seeking only the interest of the Indians: the "noble savages" of the generous tradition to which he subscribed.

Most of all, Grant declared, Priber inculcated "into the minds of the Indians a great care & Jealousy for their Lands, and that they should keep the English at a distance from them." The history of English dealings with the Indians in this respect was certainly less reassuring than that of the French. Potentially Priber's programme of independence constituted a sharp challenge to the expansive tendencies which English colonists had everywhere shown.

By Grant's account Priber's advice in these matters "produced a very extraordinary letter to this Government from the Indians which was written by Pryber & signed by him as Prime Minister. This first opened the eyes of the Government, and shewed

them the great danger of his continuing any longer there, and accordingly they sent up letters to me desiring that I would do my endeavour to have him apprehended & sent down." After a futile attempt Grant found it impossible to execute the commission without angering the Indians, and since he was at the time "deeply Engaged in Trade and saw the great ill inconvenience of . . . Intermeddling any more in this matter," he declined the task. Thereupon the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina, in March 1739, appropriated £402 (provincial currency) for the expenses of "Col. Joseph Fox, and two men, going to the Cherokees to bring down Dr. Priber." Failing to draw Priber out of the town, Fox foolishly attempted to seize him in the town-house of Great Tellico, "for which he had like to have suffered." On that occasion was demonstrated the prestige which Priber had acquired among the Indians. "One of the head warriors rose up, and bade him forbear, as the man he intended to enslave, was made a great beloved man, and become one of their own people." The Indians earnestly requested the English "to send no more of those bad papers to their country, on any account; nor to reckon them so base as to allow any of their honest friends to be taken out of their arms, and carried into slavery." At the same time they expressed a desire to live in friendship with the English—but "as freemen and equals."

Firmly entrenched against his enemies in the affections of the Cherokee, Priber essayed the rôle which was most congenial to his philosophical spirit: that of Lycurgus, of law-giver, to the American Indians.

His immediate object, avowed to "Americus" at Frederica, was "neither more nor less than to bring about a confederation amongst all the southern Indians." Adair, who was curiously blind to Priber's utopianism, nevertheless perceived that he was engaged upon a grandiose scheme for the political organization of the Cherokee and for the formation of an extensive Indian league. "Having thus infected them by his smooth deluding art," wrote the historian of the southern Indians, with reference to the Cherokee, "he easily formed them into a nominal republican government—crowned their old Archi-magus, emperor, after a pleasing new savage form, and invented a variety of high-sounding

titles for all the members of his imperial majesty's red court, and the great officers of state; which the emperor conferred upon them, in a manner according to their merit. He himself received the honourable title of his imperial majesty's principal secretary of state, and as such he subscribed himself, in all the letters he wrote to our government, and lived in open defiance of them." When Priber's project was frustrated by his arrest, the "red empire" which he had "formed by slow but sure degrees, to the great danger of our southern colonies," was on the point "of rising into a far greater state of puissance"—so Adair believed—"by the acquisition of the Muskohge, Choktah, and the western Mississippi Indians."

Priber's ultimate object, however, was not, as Adair imagined, to convert the English Indians to the French alliance; but to develop, under the protection of an independent confederacy of southern Indians and in its midst, a communistic establishment which should serve as a model for a republic which might later be set up in France. Under cover of such ceremonialism as Adair described—well devised to appeal to the barbaric taste—the Saxon carried on among the Indians and among the whites who visited them a propaganda for his revolutionary social programme. A site at the foot of the mountains, between the Cherokee and the Creeks, was chosen for the community, partly because of the more fertile soil, partly because there a trade could be carried on conveniently with both English and French. To this establishment Priber assured Bonnefoy and his companions that he had won many adherents among the English traders, a class perpetually in debt to the Charles Town merchants; and among the Indians, whose own institutions were not in principle opposed to those he advocated. Ludovick Grant, who held in virtuous scorn Priber's visionary ideas, observed that "he proposed to them a new System or plan of Government, that all things should be in common amongst them, that even their Wives should be so and that the Children should be looked upon as the Children of the public and be taken care of as such & not by their natural parents, that they should move the chief seat of Government to a place nearer the French called Coosawattee, where in ancient times a Town had stood

belonging to the Cherokees. And that they should admit into their society Creeks & Catawbaws, French & English, all Colours and Complexions, in short all who were of These principles, which," the trader piously concluded, "were truly such as had no principles at all."

The form of the republic, as Priber expounded it to the French captives, was to be a *société générale*, in which the two fundamental principles of *liberty* and *equality* should be perfectly observed. In his emphasis upon equality, Priber reflected the strongest positive tendency in the social thinking of his century. To observers as diverse as d'Argenson and Meslier the great evil of existing society appeared to be the disparity between men in point of rank and condition. Even Montesquieu held that equality was the ideal of the republic: an ideal to be attained, however, only in the small state. In harmony with his school Priber conceived of equality as not only civil and political, but also, and necessarily, economic. In the "Kingdom of Paradise" private property was not to exist even in the mitigated form of small holdings, advocated for republics by Montesquieu; all goods should there be held in common. Thus equality, in Priber's theory, meant communism. It also meant uniformity, even in such details as the houses and furniture of the citizens. Among the latter there was to be no adventitious superiority, of any sort. The author of the ideal commonwealth, himself, would undertake its direction solely for the honor involved. In stressing the principle of liberty, however, Priber sounded a note not always heard in Utopia. D'Argenson, on the contrary, had praised the benevolent despotism as the form of government best designed to ensure equality among the subjects. One of the most popular of the literary utopias of that period, the *Histoire des Sévérambes* of Varaisse d'Alais (1677), had described a complete tyranny, exercised for the common good. In contrast to the minute regulations imposed by Sevarias, the "Kingdom of Paradise" was to have as its sole law the law of nature. Moreover, the liberty which was allowed to men should be shared equally by women; in sign of which no marriages should be contracted. The children of the temporary unions were to be reared by the state, and instructed in everything which they were capable

of learning. Priber clearly had in view a society in which every talent should have unhampered opportunity for development; and where each citizen should work according to his abilities for the good of the republic. The axiom of the Saint-Simonists ("to each according to his needs, from each according to his capacity") was anticipated by Priber: "Chacun y trouveroit son nécessaire tant pour la subsistence que pour les autres besoins de la vie, que chacun aussy contribueroit au bien de la société de ce dont il seroit capable."

In the history of utopias Priber's project occupies an undefined middle ground between the purely literary utopia, on the one hand—of the class of More's prototypal work, of Campanella's "City of the Sun," of a whole literature in the drama and the romance which flourished in Priber's own time—and, on the other, the applied utopianism of the Anabaptists of the Reformation period, of the Fourierists and the Owenites. The book which would have given him place among the authors of ideal commonwealths was in manuscript when he was carried captive to Frederica, and probably perished with him—as also his dictionary of the Cherokee language which would have established his name among the first students of American linguistics. From the glimpses of his ideas which uncultured frontiersmen were able to catch, it is clear that there has been lost, if not one of the great utopias, at least one most significant of his century. The catalogue of characteristics which M. Joly has ascribed to eighteenth-century "socialism" fits, with little amendment, the social philosophy of Priber: "République, vertu, bonheur, innocence, égalité, communauté, courage et pauvreté, . . . Lycurgue, . . . et l'âge d'or et les bons sauvages, et le christianisme sentimental, et le simple nature, et les jésuites du Paraguay, tout cela forme un faisceau indissoluble."

The possibility of establishing a new social order upon a basis essentially moral and metaphysical rather than scientific was never tested, as Priber had planned, in the "Kingdom of Paradise" of Cusawatee. It was his misfortune that his design ran right athwart the imperial purposes of the English in America. Hardly had he begun to spread his propaganda among the neighbors of the Cherokee, than the commander at Fort Augusta "on the main" perceived a "remarkable intractibility in the Creek Indians, in matters of trade." After inquiries he traced the

responsibility—to “a white man, who had resided some time in the upper towns, after having been many years among the Cherokees, who always shewed him the utmost deference.” On instructions from Captain Kent the English traders secured the arrest of Priber, who was on his way, as they believed, to the French at Mobile; and sent him down, with his bundle of manuscripts, to Frederica. (Thereupon the Indians “made it very apparent by their clamours, that they were not a little interested in his safety.”) The treatment accorded him in Georgia was that of a political prisoner of rank and importance; he was confined in the barracks and guarded by a sentry night and day. In the ruin of his hopes he continued to maintain an imperturbable front. “‘It is folly,’ he would say, ‘to repine at one’s lot in life:—my mind soars above misfortune;—in this cell I can enjoy more real happiness, than it is possible to do in the busy scenes of life. Reflections upon past events, digesting former studies, keep me fully employed, whilst health and abundant spirits allow me no anxious, no uneasy moments;—I suffer,—though a friend to the natural rights of mankind,—though an enemy to tyranny, usurpation, and oppression;—and what is more,—I can forgive and pray for those that injure me. . . .’”

After a few years of imprisonment, Priber died. The verdict upon his career has followed too closely the opinion of his enemy, Ludovick Grant: “Thus ended the famous Pryber . . . a most Notorious Rogue & iniquitous fellow who if he had been permitted to have lived much longer in that Country would undoubtedly have drawn that nation over to the French Interest.” More generous in his judgment was Adair, who likewise regarded Priber as a menace to English dominion in southern America, but who nevertheless affirmed that “he deserved a much better fate.”

He deserved, no doubt, a better fate than the oblivion which has befallen him. Philosopher, utopian, linguist, scholar, friend of peace, of progress, of the Indian, his was a solitary figure among the ruder folk who peopled the outer fringe of European civilization in America. Chimerical his enterprise must seem. By reason of it, however, the first American frontier became, for a few years, the first frontier of eighteenth-century social idealism.

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